

Wright State University

**CORE Scholar**

---

The Miami Valley School Documents and Letters

The Miami Valley School (MS-358)

---

June 2014

## Excerpt of a letter from [Fritz Marti]

Fritz Marti

Follow this and additional works at: [https://corescholar.libraries.wright.edu/special\\_ms358\\_documents](https://corescholar.libraries.wright.edu/special_ms358_documents)



Part of the [Education Commons](#)

---

### Repository Citation

Marti , F. (2014). *Excerpt of a letter from [Fritz Marti]*. .

This Letter is brought to you for free and open access by the The Miami Valley School (MS-358) at CORE Scholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Miami Valley School Documents and Letters by an authorized administrator of CORE Scholar. For more information, please contact [library-corescholar@wright.edu](mailto:library-corescholar@wright.edu).



The State Board of Education will meet again on November 12 in order to consider, and possibly vote for the amendments to the proposed Minimum Standards for Ohio Highschools.

A sub-committee is now working on such amendments, and its chairman is Mr. Wayne Shaffer, of the law firm ~~Newcomb, Newcomb~~ *Newcomber* and Shaffer in Brvan, Ohio. (in the northwest corner of the state).

Mr. Shaffer will want to know the reasons for our suggested additions which would make it possible for The Mart School to live under the code.

Of course there is a fundamental difference between our school and most others, in what the Educators with a capital E call "the philosophy", thus blasphemically misusing a sacred word. Mr. Shaffer may not be particularly interested in this difference, and the difference most certainly will not change the basis of the proposed Standards in our favor. However, for the sake of being as clear as possible on our own stand, and for the sake of agreement among ourselves, I had better formulate this difference.

We believe in measuring a pupil's attainments by examinations and achievement tests. We do not believe in measuring by "units". We know from experience that the recording of "units" on some paper form does not prove that the pupil has mastered the subject matter for which the "unit" has been recorded. This last summer, not one pupil in Mrs. Marti's algebra class had mastered the subject, yet all but one had been given a "unit" for algebra (Algebra I). They had a grasp of the subject at the end of the summer course. - We believe the only honorable way to enter college is by College Entrance Examination or by a similar objective test of accomplishment, and not by the accumulation of questionable "units". We very well understand that schools which by law must enroll every child regardless of ability and accomplishment; schools which are overcrowded and understaffed; schools which must move pupils upward from grade to grade in order to free the lower schoolrooms for the more and more numerous newcomers; schools which cannot afford to go slowly with the slow and fast with the fast, must perforce use some kind of measurement that can be applied more or less mechanically, e.g. by counting the hours a pupil spends in the classroom in which a subject is being taught. We have no intention to propose that big schools and especially that public schools change their method of counting "units". We know however that it is a tort to any school like ours to demand that we, too, move by this inexpedient system of measuring accomplishment. We have no illusion that the proposed Standards could be so amended as to frankly admit the difference between unit-minded and achievement-minded schools. Therefore we must take it for granted that the Standards and their very basis, the "units" will be voted by the State Board and that we shall have to live under these Standards. Our only hope is that amendments in line with our suggestions will make it possible for us to continue with our deliberately slower and more thorough system. Such a modus vivendi is possible. The State Superintendent of Education, Mr. E. E. Holt, himself formulated our need succinctly when, after the hearing of October 14, he said to me: "What you need is fractional units!"

In short, and by way of illustration, if we teach algebra only for two or three periods a week, instead of the five the Standard would demand, and if we cover not much more than half the ground that is allegedly covered in the five periods, but cover it thoroughly, then we ought to be per-



mitted to put on the pupil's record half a unit. Similarly, if one of our pupils, having begun French in the first grade and German in the fourth, is taking up Latin in the sixth and therefore needs a lighter schedule in the other languages, and if we still want to keep going his skills in those two languages by means of but one period's reading a week instead of the required five periods, but if in that one period we make him progress one fifth of the way measured by one full "unit" then we ought to be permitted to put on his record one fifth of a unit for each of those other two languages. For we believe that languages and mathematics, being basic tool subjects, must be kept going throughout the school years, in order to keep the pupil's skill alive and growing.

So much for form. As for content, again there is a deep disagreement which we do not hope to see disappear in our lifetime. In our opinion it is a cultural scandal that Standard XI.C. should demand for graduation from highschool only one single unit in history and that unit only in history of these United States. In our opinion it is also a most unstatesmanlike act to permit our young people to grow up ignorant of the history of the world in which they live, at a time when the very foundations of our culture are being challenged by totalitarianism, and when, within the lifetime of ourselves or of our pupils, an atomic war may bring about another period of "dark ages" during which only remnants of cultural attainments, and therefore of freedom survive and must be nursed along by informed and dedicated people till a better day. The wealthiest and most leisurely nation of the western world should insist on at least a modest amount of historical information among its future voters, even though the mind of man is incapable of devising tests of cultural maturity and although such tests would be quite undesirable because they would tend to regiment the mind. - We also believe it is scandalous and unstatesmanly not to insist on more linguistic instruction. But we realize that neither for world history nor for languages the nation has enough qualified teachers.

If Mr. Shaffer should want me to say some of these things orally, in order to save his time and give him a chance to crossquestion me, I shall be glad to drive to Bryan. This could be arranged November 6 or 7, or again 9 or 10 or 11. However, it may not be necessary to take up his time. He may already understand, for example through conversations with Mr. Holt, what a small school like ours needs.

As for the wording of my suggested additions to the Standard, that can be left to the discretion of Mr. Shaffer and his sub-committee. For instance, Standard II.A. might say: "There shall be at least one teacher for every ten pupils or fraction thereof."

The asterisks indicate the most important items. The very program of our school would be outlawed were we restricted to a maximum of five subjects any pupil may be permitted to carry in a given school term. (Standard X.A.)

The most important addition - no matter how worded - must permit us the recording of fractional units. (Standard XIII.E.)

The least important addition is about library requirements. Donations might make it possible for us to put in a total of 2000 volumes immediately.

Study hall discipline should be managed by the pupils themselves, and ours are busily working on that problem.